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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

10 APR 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, National Reconnaissance Office

SUBJECT: Proposal for Surfacing an LRI Prototype  
as Cover for the OXCART Program

1. The OXCART program initiated in 1959, has during the ensuing years and up to the present time progressed through the development and initial construction phase and, surprisingly, through an entire year of flight testing and flight training without a single exposure or significant security breach which resulted in attracting public attention to the program.

2. This accomplishment becomes even more remarkable when it is appreciated that practical considerations have forced us to adhere to a pattern that is widely known and associated with the U-2 program and involving such elements as Lockheed, Kelly Johnson, [redacted] etc.

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3. This record, which has exceeded our most optimistic expectations, was not established through fortuitous circumstance and at least passing recognition should be accorded those who have had responsibility for the security of the program since its inception.

4. With the advent of the R-12 procurement, it should be recognized that the program cannot be contained in the same manner as in the past. More than 7,000 persons in industry already are either fully or partially cleared. In addition, the increased frequency of flights will almost inevitably result in an incident under circumstances that we may not be able to control. The magnitude of the program in itself negates any effort at complete concealment, and there is already

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an awareness in the aviation industry that Lockheed is engaged in a highly classified project of a unique nature. (A summary of examples of this awareness has been prepared by the Security Branch, OSA, and is attached at Tab A.) It must be assumed that public exposure is only a matter of time and steps must be taken now to prepare to meet this contingency and to protect the OXCART phase of the program.

5. In addition to concealing the true mission of the OXCART vehicle and plausibly ascribing to it a different purpose, there is the more difficult and potentially explosive political problem of explaining and justifying the limited competition procurement of the aircraft and the secrecy which cloaked its development. The possible political connotations of the latter will almost certainly not go unnoticed by those Members of Congress who are unwitting of the program, and the resultant clamor for investigation could quickly get out of control unless effective measures are taken beforehand to cope with such a development. The current TFX controversy has further compounded and accentuated this aspect of the problem. To a lesser degree, but still of considerable concern, is the anticipated reaction of the technical press and possibly some components of the aviation industry itself.

6. Our success to date in protecting the OXCART/AF-12 programs from public exposure is cited as an argument in favor of continuing our present policy without change. Under this concept we would not voluntarily surface any part of the program until forced to do so by some untoward incident or compromise.

7. Conversely, it is argued that such a course deprives us of the selection of the time and circumstances of such surfacing and also deprives us of the psychological advantages inherent in a voluntary surfacing as opposed to a situation in which it will be obvious to everyone that we are being forced by circumstances beyond our control to explain belatedly a program which we would have preferred to conceal from public view.

8. Whichever course is selected--i.e., controlled or uncontrolled surfacing--the problem of providing a plausible cover story is the same. The elements of the cover story would be identical

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in each instance; however, it seems logical that the plausibility would be significantly enhanced if the surfacing were voluntary. On balance, we conclude that a controlled surfacing offers advantages which outweigh the benefits deriving from our present policy which is becoming more untenable with the elapse of time and increased tempo of operations.

9. The cover story which will be employed in surfacing the AF-12 portion of the program must contain as many elements of truth as possible, short of jeopardizing the OXCART version. With this as a primary consideration, it becomes more and more obvious that the best solution is to surface the long-range interceptor prototype, the first one of which will be available by approximately mid-July 1963.

10. It is proposed that the Defense Department announce that a prototype of a long-range interceptor developed by Lockheed Aircraft Company for the USAF will commence flight tests at Edwards AFB on or about 15 July 1963. Whether the LRI, currently designated the X-22, will go into full production will depend on the decision of the Secretary of Defense which, in turn, will be based on the results of a major study and evaluation of further AF interceptor needs currently underway at the Pentagon and due on the desk of Secretary McNamara early in June.

11. The announcement will further state that the LRI prototype is the result of a limited design competition between Convair and Lockheed in 1959 which resulted in the selection of the LAC design using the Pratt and Whitney J-58 engine. The stringent security measures applied to the development program from its inception resulted from a decision by the previous administration to deny to the Soviets critical information on our future air defense systems which could vitally affect their decisions with regard to offensive weapons systems and countermeasures. The program was reviewed by the present administration in 1961, and the decision was made to continue development of the aircraft under the same rigid security policy then in effect.

12. Armament is provided by the Hughes Aircraft Corporation and is a version of the ASG-18 long-range radar and GAR-9 air-to-air missile. This system has been undergoing tests in a B-58 at Edwards AFB for the past two years.

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13. Performance figures on the LRI will not be revealed, and beyond this announcement the high security level that has characterized this development will be continued in order to protect performance information.

14. There remains the question as to the timing of the controlled surfacing. It would be desirable to have available, at the time of the announcement, a prototype which could be displayed at Edwards AFB. This would require a delay in surfacing the LRI at least until mid-July 1963. Assuming that the Senate TFX hearings will have been concluded by then, this would have the added advantage of surfacing under a more favorable climate than presently exists. If the disclosure were made in the midst of the TFX hearings, any effort by the Senate Committee to avoid its introduction into the controversy would be almost painfully obvious and probably futile.

15. Conversely, if we delay the surfacing, it is with the attendant risk that an incident may occur in the interim with resultant loss of the advantages which would accrue from a controlled surfacing.

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16. In either case, it is proposed that no mention will be

[REDACTED]

cribed as a highly classified research program under the sponsorship of the Department of Defense with control and test operations being supervised by the Department of the Air Force. No further disclosures will be made.

17. At the present time there are twenty-one Congressmen briefed on OXCART. They are primarily members of the House Armed Services and House Appropriations Committees, and members of the Senate Armed Services and Senate Appropriations Combined Subcommittees (See Tab B).

18. One favorable aspect of the program lies in the fact that it will be extremely difficult for any Congressman to make a partisan political issue of the subject. The limited design competition and rigid security policy were established during a Republican administration and endorsed and continued by a Democratic administration. Nevertheless, it appears highly desirable that prior to any announcement

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being made some additional key members of Congress be fully briefed on the OXCART program. In this way it might be possible to quell any Congressional conflagration even before it started. Such briefings probably should include Senators McClellan, Dirksen, Mundt, and Goldwater, and Representative Halleck. It might also be advisable to solicit the recommendations of those Congressmen already briefed as to what other measures we might undertake to achieve our objectives with Congress.

19. It is not anticipated that the aviation industry in itself will constitute a major problem; however, it would be prudent to be prepared to brief the top men in certain aircraft corporations if there were indications of an unfavorable reaction. The technical press may attempt to make a cause celebre of the announcement, but in the absence of strong reaction from the industry and Congress, it is believed that the critical comments will be short-lived.


20. It should be noted that at present we have an agreed inter-departmental contingency plan for OXCART which has been reviewed and approved by such august bodies as the Special Group and the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board. Although a number of persons have expressed reservations as to the plausibility of this plan, which relates the vehicle to an airborne satellite launch system, should an incident occur tomorrow we would have little choice but to proceed in accordance with the approved plan.

21. Recommendations:

a. That the Ad Hoc Cover Committee be convened as soon as possible to consider the proposed surfacing of the LRI as a cover mechanism for OXCART.

b. That the Committee resolve and make a recommendation on the timing of the surfacing.

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HERBERT SCOVILLE, JR.  
Deputy Director  
(Research)

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Attachments A & B

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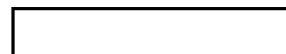
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*Attachment A6*

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Research)

SUBJECT : Project OXCART  
(Awareness in Aviation Industry)

1. This memorandum is for your information.
2. The OSA Security staff has invited to my attention the attached summary of examples of the increasing extent of awareness in uncleared industrial circles of Project OXCART.
3. Recently, it seems that almost daily a new indication appears that in the aviation business circles more and more people are putting two and two together regarding this Project. As touched upon in the attached, the sources interviewed mention that even without actual leaks of classified information there are enough indicators available to support a calculated estimate of the nature of Kelly Johnson's endeavors. Some of the "estimates" are right on the target.
4. The possibility of leaks can not be discounted, of course. In this regard as at 13 March 1963 the following number of persons were cleared for OXCART:

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CIA  
Other U. S. Government  
Total U. S. Government  
Industry (Fully & Partially Cleared)  
Total Cleared

[Redacted Box]

5. With KEDLOCK coming along it must be anticipated that the problem of containing information concerning the existence and status of OXCART and, of course, KEDLOCK, will be that much more difficult to handle.
6. OSA Security is "beefing up" its staff and in addition to monitoring the security of these programs will

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endeavor to react promptly to plug up leaks and "too close to the truth" speculations. You may desire, however, to invite to the attention of the Director, the information highlighted herein to ensure that he is aware of the climate in which we are endeavoring to protect these ultra-sensitive activities.

7. I have encouraged all elements of this Office to vigorously address themselves to this considerable problem to ensure that our maximum effort is riveted upon the best possible solution.

JACK C. LEDFORD  
COLONEL, USAF  
Assistant Director  
(Special Activities)

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Attachment, as stated

CSA/SB [redacted] Apr (20 March 1963)

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